Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first magnetic pole layer;

removing both sides in a track width direction of the first magnetic pole layer so as to leave a predetermined residual area in the first magnetic pole layer;

forming an insulating layer about the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer;

forming a gap layer made of a nonmagnetic material on the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer and the insulating layer;

forming on the ~~gap layer~~ gap layer, a second magnetic pole layer magnetically connected to the first magnetic pole layer; and

patterning the second magnetic pole layer by etching while using a mask, so that a width of the second magnetic pole layer in the track width direction is smaller than that of the residual area.

2. (Original) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the insulating layer is formed from Al_2O_3.

3. (Original) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the residual area of the first magnetic pole layer has a width of about 0.5 μm to about 2.0 μm in the track width direction.

4. (Original) A method of manufacturing a thin-film magnetic head according to claim 1, wherein the first magnetic pole layer is constructed by laminating a plurality of magnetic layers;

wherein at least the topmost layer in the plurality of magnetic layers is formed with the residual area; and

wherein the insulating layer is formed on both sides in the track width direction of the residual area.